



## **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND ITS IMPACT ON ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of the formation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies in primary school students and its influence on academic success. The study highlights the impact of SEL components self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making skills on students' reading, mathematics, and overall learning outcomes. It also substantiates the mechanisms for integrating SEL into primary education, pedagogical conditions and expected results. The results of the study indicate that the SEL approach is an important factor in ensuring students' psychological well-being and social adaptation while enhancing their academic performance.

**Keywords:** Social-emotional learning, SEL, primary school, academic success, emotional intelligence, competency approach, educational effectiveness.

### **Introduction**

Modern education system is aimed not only at acquiring knowledge, but also on ensuring the personal, social and emotional development of students. In global educational practice, social-emotional learning (SEL) is recognized as an important pedagogical factor in enhancing students' academic success, behavioural and psychological well-being. Developing SEL competencies, especially at primary school age, provides a solid foundation for students' successful learning in later years.

Elementary school students face specific challenges in managing their emotions, communicating with peers, adhering to social norms, and making responsible



decisions. Therefore, systematic introduction of SEL into the academic process contributes to the improvement of academic performance.

Social Emotional Learning is a continuous pedagogical process aimed at developing students' skills to understand and manage emotions, build positive relationships, show empathy, make responsible decisions and adapt to the social environment.

A SEL includes the following five key components:

1. Self-awareness: Acknowledging one's own feelings, interests, and strengths;
2. Self-regulation: control of emotions, cope with stress;
3. Social awareness: understanding of others, empathy;
4. Relationship-building: effective communication and cooperation;
5. Responsible Decision-Making: Choices Based on Social and Ethical Norms.

The use of SEL in primary education serves to accomplish the following pedagogical tasks:

- formation of positive behavior in students;
- creating a positive psychological environment in the classroom;
- reduce stress and emotional tension;
- self-confidence of students;
- Increased motivation for the lesson.

A positive emotional environment allows students to concentrate, complete tasks consciously, and actively participate in learning activities.

Academic studies show that students with social-emotional competencies will:

- achieve high results in reading and mathematics;
- independently and responsibly carry out tasks;
- has fewer disciplinary problems in the course of the lesson;
- is able to find a constructive solution in complex situations.

Self-regulation and concentration skills developed through SEL have a direct impact on students' cognitive processes, which increases academic success.

### **Subject: Responsible Decision Making**

### **The SEL component: Responsible Decision-Making**

### **Grade: Grades 3–4**

**Purpose of the lesson.** The main goal of this course is to develop the skills of conscious and responsible decision-making in primary school students based on social and moral norms in real life situations. In the course process, it is aimed to



develop students' competencies in analyzing problem situations, looking at alternative solutions, assessing the possible consequences of each choice, and understanding individual and collective responsibility.

Also, through this lesson, students are formed independent thinking, a critical approach, a sense of responsibility in relation to their behavior, as well as the preparation to act in accordance with the norms of behavior accepted in society. These goals are implemented in conjunction with the "responsible decision-making" component of the concept of social-emotional education (SEL).

**Lesson Tasks.** During the lesson, the following pedagogical tasks are solved: development of students' ability to understand and analyze life problems; develop skills to identify and compare different decision options; teaching to assess in advance the pros and cons of each choice; strengthening the notions of ethical, social and personal responsibility; to develop a culture of students to substantiate their opinions and respect the opinions of others.

At the introductory stage of the lesson, the teacher will briefly explain the essence of the concept of responsible decision-making, and pay attention to the importance of making the right choice in everyday life. It will be explained to students the importance of asking such questions as "what could happen?", "who will be affected by this decision?", "what will be the consequences?".

At the basic stage, the teacher provides the students with a clear life situation. For example, it describes a situation in which a student is challenged by a friend to play when he or she has to do his homework. Based on this situation, students are divided into small groups and offer different solutions to the existing problem. Each group justifies its choice, analyzing its possible positive and negative consequences. In the process of discussion, the teacher deepens the students' thinking process through guiding questions, but does not give ready answers.

At the final stage, the views expressed by the groups are summarized. Readers will judge which decision is more responsible, and how much it is in the best interests of the community and the individual. In the process of reflection, students give feedback on what they learned from this lesson and how they will behave in such situations in the future.

**Methods used in the lesson.** In the course of this lesson, problem-based education, situational analysis, group discussion, dialogical approach and



reflexion methods are used. These methods serve to ensure the active participation of students, the effective development of independent thinking and responsible decision-making skills.

**Evaluation criteria.** Students' activities are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: the level of understanding of the situation and the ability to identify the problem; the logic and justification of the proposed decision; the ability to assess the consequences; communication and group activity; adherence to social and ethical norms.

In the assessment process, formative (encouragement) assessment methods are mainly used.

**Expected results.** At the end of this lesson, students will develop the skills of conscious and responsible decision-making in life situations. They are accustomed to being able to anticipate the consequences of their actions, to take into account social and moral norms as well as for personal gain. As a result, students' social adaptation, self-regulation, and accountability in academic activities increase markedly.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is an important pedagogical factor in ensuring the academic success of students in primary schools. The emotional and social competencies formed through SEL serve to effectively organize students' learning activities, deepen knowledge and develop positive social relationships.

Methodologically, it is advisable to give as a recommendation:

Systematic introduction of SEL elements into primary education programs.

Development of SEL guidelines for teachers.

Supporting emotional development in partnership with parents.

Development of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of SEL.

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